

44. Ibid., p. 41.
45. Ibid., p. 47.
46. Ibid., p. 51; IRC, *Decision No. 8*, op. cit., 9-10.
47. IRC, *Transcript*, op. cit., 7/2/84, p. 52.
48. Ibid., 39-40.
49. Ibid., p. 41.
50. Ibid., pp. 39-40, 53.
51. Ibid., p. 48.
52. IRC, *Decision No. 8*, p. 8.
53. IRC, *Transcript*, op. cit., 7/2/84, p. 51.
54. Ibid.
55. IRC, *Decision No. 8*, op. cit., p. 12.
56. IRC, *Decision No. 28/1984*, 8/5/84, p. 5. Other specific classifications covered by the Board include the Chief Librarian at Deakin University; the Associate Librarian and Senior Librarian at the University of Melbourne; the Chief Librarian, Associate Librarian, Senior Librarian, Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Graduate Library Assistant, Probationary Assistant Librarian, and Language Teacher at La Trobe University; and the University Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Senior Librarian at Monash University (ibid).
57. Ibid.
58. IRC *Transcript*, op. cit., 12/4/84, p. 113.
59. J.M. Hearn, 'Industrial Activity and Political Influence: Strengthening the Nexus in Academic Unions', *Vestes*, 27, 2, 1984, pp. 2-7.
60. IRC, *Transcript*, op. cit., 12/4/84, p. 114.
61. Ibid, pp. 112-114.
62. The word state with a small s is used here to refer to the theoretical concept of the state, covering both State and Federal Governments and bureaucracies. State with a capital s refers to areas such as Western Australia, Queensland, etc.
63. IRC, *Transcript*, op. cit., 12/4/84, p. 118; see also pp. 110-121.
64. May, 1984.
65. R. Hall, 'FAUSA and the ACTU: The Case for Affiliation', *Vestes*, 24, 1, 1981, pp. 31-33.
66. Interview by Author, 12/2/86.
67. A. Kouzmin, 'Control and Organization:

- Towards a Reflexive Analysis', in P. Boreham, P. and G. Dow, (Eds.), *Work and Inequality Volume 2: Ideology and Control in the Capitalist Labour Process*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 130-162.
68. This situation has only just recently showed signs of changing. In January, 1986 university academics throughout the United Kingdom went on strike in support of better pay and conditions (*New Statesman*, 24/1/86, 11-12, *FAUSA News*, 4/2/86).
69. See G. Baldwin, *Women at Monash University*, Monash University, Melbourne, 1985, for an analysis of the position of academic women at Monash University.
70. P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, London, 1970.
71. B. Bessant, 'The Erosion of University Autonomy in Australia', *Vestes*, 25, 1, 1982, p. 32.
72. D. Levy, 'Accountability and Autonomy: A Cross-National Analysis of Recent Trends', *Vestes*, 23, 2, 1980, pp. 19-24.
73. See J.E. Lane, 'University Autonomy: A New Analysis', *Vestes*, 24, 1, 1981, pp. 17-27, who argues that university autonomy needs to be seen as encompassing a number of areas of academic life.
74. It is no coincidence that the first two cases brought before the Board were on behalf of two major non-tenured groups of academics — research assistants, and Monash University tutors.
75. Accommodative arbitration is where a tribunal 'acts as a rubber stamp in handing down decisions which approximate the relative power positions of the parties'. Administrative arbitration attaches an active role, sanctioned by the parties, for the tribunal. The parties, unable to resolve their problems themselves look to members of the tribunal for help and guidance. . . . Judicial arbitration is where an arbitrator hears the competing claims of the parties, and on the basis of the evidence presented, hands down a binding decision! B. Dabscheck, 'Theories of

Regulation and Australian Industrial Relations', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 23, 4, 1981, p. 431.

76. Theoretically, the establishment of the Board means that employers can, if they wish, commence actions against employees. In practice, however, such actions are highly unlikely. As noted in FAUSA, 'under the present situation the University administrations have all the power they require to, if they so desire, slowly decrease the conditions of employment for academic staff' (FAUSA, op. cit., U374).
77. Study will also need to be made of the expertise the universities gain in dealing with the arbitration system. Hence, reflected in the resistance of the universities to the Board was their relative inexperience in participating in the industrial relations machinery of the 1980s. In much the same way that FAUSA had been inexperienced in its first application for a Wages Board, it was clear from the Commission hearing that the representative for the universities lacked a similar experience and knowledge of the way Boards are set up or operate. At a number of points the representative had to be instructed on various procedural matters relating to Boards, and confessed his ignorance and lack of skill in their establishment (see IRC, *Transcript*, op. cit., 7/2/84, p. 50; 12/4/84, p. 151). As universities are drawn into the arbitration system of industrial relations, universities themselves are being forced to employ industrial relations officers to ensure proper representation. The Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee is currently filling such a position (Age, 8/2/86). Also, at Monash University for example, the administrative section of the campus is in the process of being restructured so that a separate administrative branch will deal exclusively with industrial relations (*Sound*, 30/4/86).
78. IRC, *Universities Academic Staff Conciliation and Arbitration Board Transcript B850386*, 4/11/85, p. 191

The force of destiny: Industrial relations in Australian universities

J.F. Scott *
Vice-Chancellor
La Trobe University

There is an atmosphere of the theatre about industrial relations in any arena, let alone universities. The participants will usually have at least one performer on each side who can readily burst into a passionate speech about the iniquities of the other side, at times the discussion enters a cut and thrust that appears as deadly as a stage sword fight but in reality is as harmless, occasionally a speaker forgets his lines and needs a loud prompt, while the whole drama moves in a predictable way to an inevitable conclusion like a Greek tragedy.

For twenty years now, I have been a performer in this art form, first in the UK and then in Australia. I was going to write 'on the universities' side', but one of the paradoxes of academic life is that we are all on the universities' side, so perhaps it would be better to describe my actions as being on management's side. Even that is a misnomer, for a significant proportion of both academic and general staff are basically in management.

This experience and the dramatic overtones of industrial relations leads me inevitably to think of my great love: opera. There the heroes and the heroines, the tenors and the prima donnas fight out their struggles in a world of suspended belief but in the final scene their ill-considered actions of the earlier acts lead to a show-down of tragic consequence.

The classic Italian opera of, say, Verdi is in three or four acts. In the first act the characters are introduced, there are indications of the drama about to unfold and early skirmishings between the characters take place; a curse may be enunciated. In the second act, the plot is developed, the revenge becomes apparent and the heroine moves into a nunnery. By the third act (usually of several scenes), the protagonists are confused by external events, a war or a famine, and it looks for a moment as if all may be resolved happily. It ends with a chorus of merriment and hope. But, in act four, retribution occurs, the curse is fulfilled and the surviving characters move off to resume their lives, with perhaps a faint hint that a better world lies around the corner. La Forza del Destino, the Force of Destiny is such an opera.

'The university system in Australia is unique in that a large proportion of its employees, namely the academic staff, have not until recently been subject to any award.'

So let us take our seats for this four act saga of Australian universities' industrial relations. But before the curtain rises, we must have an overture, rehearsing some of the main themes of the opera.

The university system in Australia is unique in that a large proportion of its employees, namely the academic staff, have not until recently been subject to any award. Indeed, the first real academic award, covering research assistants, took place in 1986 in Victoria, quickly followed by a determination covering tutors at Monash University, again in Victoria. It is perhaps surprising that an educational enterprise, with recent expenditure totalling over \$1000 million and over ten thousand academic staff should have been award-free for so long. I would suggest two reasons, themes that will be developed later.

First, there is the collegiate nature of universities. Academic staff are both employees and managers. Pro-Vice-Chancellors, deans, chairpersons appoint and assign duties to their colleagues. They have to decide how to spend their devolved budgets to best advantage, they are members of their staff associations and sit on governing bodies, the official employers of the staff. In the modern participatory structures of university government, many staff take part in deciding who to employ, how to allocate duties and who to promote. It is not easy to identify the wicked employer who should be taken to the Industrial Commission and forced to concede an award. Indeed, the normal concept of an award defining hours of work, recreation leave and protective clothing fits uneasily on academic shoulders.

Secondly, there have been structural difficulties preventing conventional industrial processes. Staff associations have had an identity problem in deciding whether they were professional organisations or trade unions, a dilemma that still faintly persists. The development of conventional industrial relations in universities was inhibited until recently by the narrow interpretation of what constituted an industry. Finally, until universities became large complex organisations with a bureaucracy of their own, there was not an overwhelming need for awards and negotiations.

So much for our overture: the lights are dimmed and the curtain rises on Act 1. We are in a calm peaceful setting dated about 1974. The old system is about to topple. The Federal Government has decided to fund fully the universities rather than rely on joint funding with the states. Instead of relaxed discussions between the vice-chancellor and a few senior staff about academic conditions or a chat between one of the registrar's department and co-operative member of the general staff association about an unfortunate minor incident, federal unions are becoming interested in universities.

Operatic first acts introduce the major characters, develop a little skirmishing between them and it ends with some dramatic incident, often a murder culminating in a splendid curse that will dominate the remaining action.

Let me introduce our principal characters. First, there are the universities as employers. Legally, the governing bodies (Councils, Senates etc.) are the employers of all staff, but they are too large a body to engage in industrial relations even within the institution, let alone nationally. The councils have traditionally invested the vice-chancellors with the responsibility of conducting discussions and negotiations with staff representatives, advised by a sub-committee who may recommend on policy, with council reserving the right to be kept informed and ultimately ratifying any agreements that may emerge. The vice-chancellor, then, is my hero, perhaps not surprisingly!

"It would be unfair to portray anyone as a villain in this drama . . ."

It would be unfair to portray anyone as a villain in this drama and many operas do not have clear-cut villains. More often there are characters who are caught by the force of destiny to find themselves taking actions that frustrate the interests of the hero. Here, the two characters in this role are the general staff and the academic staff associations. The heroine, of course, is the university. Finally, there are various minor characters who have considerable influence on the action, but do not have quite the same significance as the principal players. In this opera, these parts are played by the Federal and State Arbitration Commissions, the Academic Salaries Tribunal and so on. And the chorus, only occasionally making an appearance, are the ordinary staff of the universities who play no major role in the main drama but who are able to comment on the action.

In 1974, the decision to fund universities on a federal basis caught the attention of federally-registered trade unions who then attempted to obtain federal awards for university general staff. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee decided they should form an advisory group to plan responses to these moves. Under the leadership of the late Sir David Derham, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, a group known as the Industrial Study Group was established. In this first act, it was only concerned with general staff matters, and its primary purpose was to try to control events so that the universities would have to negotiate with as few trades unions as possible at the federal level. If the rather cosy atmosphere of each university dealing only with its own general staff association was to be disturbed, it was felt preferable to move to the federal arena with perhaps only one or two major unions involved.

It was not to be. The Gaudron decision of 1980 reiterated the rather narrow decision of "industry" which had been traditional in Australian industrial affairs and effectively removed the possibility of federally-registered unions looking after the interests of the majority of general staff. In true operatic style, a priestess had delivered a sentence which really turned out to be a curse which has not yet been fully redeemed. The chorus, like all choruses, not fully understanding the significance of the judgement, ends the act with a contrapuntal ensemble in a minor key over which the hero bemoans his fate.

The second act is a little chaotic and rather difficult to follow. First, the hero appears in disguise. The Industrial Study Group of the AVCC becomes the Non-Teaching Staff Advisory Committee and then the Staff Advisory Committee. Actually, the audience has no problem in penetrating these disguises; the committees still consist largely of vice-chancellors. The transformations are the result of threats from the second intervening character, the academic staff, and the entry of the Academic Salaries Tribunal. It became evident that in order to protect the heroine, the AVCC had to be prepared to negotiate on a national level with academic staff as well as general staff, and also had to prepare material for appearances before the Tribunal. These changes took place around 1980.

To a large extent the general staff complete their role in this second act. Frustrated by the curse brought down by the Gaudron decision, they pursued their claims under state jurisdiction. In the last six years, all universities have concluded arrangements with unions or general staff associations, procedures are in place to challenge wrongful dismissals and salary scales vary somewhat from university to university, although recently there has been a move by many institutions to use APS scales where appropriate. We shall not meet the general staff again until the last act.

Not only does the hero appear in several disguises during the second act. The academic staff don a military uniform and appear as FAUSA. It must be admitted that this is a very operatic name, and if we add a colloquialism for an academic, Don Fausa would grace any opera.

"Instead of being mainly an organisation of like-minded professionals, (FAUSA) is increasingly forced down the path of an industrial trade union: the force of destiny."

The difficulty of the audience in grasping what is happening is increased by a certain mistiness that creeps over the scene. FAUSA takes the stage in order to appear before the Academic Salaries Tribunal. Salaries have deteriorated, conditions like study leave are threatened and there is general support among academic staff for action to be taken. Unfortunately this action, however necessary it may be, changes the character of the Federation. Instead of being mainly an organisation of like-minded professionals, it is increasingly forced down the path of an in-

dustrial trades union: the force of destiny.

The AVCC is also somewhat confused in the early 1980s. It is very suspicious of the new-found militancy of FAUSA and is reluctant to talk: the virginity of the heroine must be protected. Also, its role in front of the Academic Salaries Tribunal is highly ambiguous. Any recommendations for increased salaries are almost certainly going to be funded by the Federal Government, so there is no strong motivation to offend staff by fiercely opposing their claims. The Federal Government will intervene in the proceedings and fight that battle. On the other hand, the vice-chancellors must not be seen to be participating in a sweetheart deal. It is the occasion for a superb trio where each singer independently states their own thoughts with little regard for the others and the Tribunal concludes by handing down its decision unmoved by most of the argument.

Perhaps the only hearing before the Tribunal where there was genuine discussion between all three major parties was that concerned with tutors' pay. There were substantial differences around Australia and both the AVCC and FAUSA could see the merits of a unified scale. However, there were naturally differing views as to whether the scale should be based on the highest or an average rate. The resulting recommendations by the Tribunal made a considerable difference to the staffing structures of some universities, since they were only funded on the basis of the national salary rates. If they had previously had a large number of lowly-paid tutors, financial reasons forced them to reconsider their tutorial staff structures.

Although the AVCC had formed the Staff Advisory Committee in recognition of the fact that staffing matters now involved academic as well as general staff, it was some time before SAC and FAUSA started direct discussions on industrial matters. By the end of the second act, mutual suspicion had clearly cast FAUSA in the role of the villain by the AVCC at least, if not by the other parties.

The curtain falls on Act II: the plot has developed, tensions between the characters have been created and the universities, our heroine, have retreated into a nunnery in the hopes that the wicked industrial world will pass them by and a grateful government will cast blessings on their head.

Third acts of operas are conventionally in several short scenes and the mood varies from gloom and tragedy to happiness and merriment. At the end, it usually looks as if all conflict will be resolved and there is a chance that everyone will live happily ever after.

In our opera, the Act opens happily. In about 1982, the Staff Advisory Commit-

tee and FAUSA started talking face to face. Both sides found that the other was not quite so dangerous as was feared. Instead of a duel, which had perhaps been in the minds of some, there were genuine discussions. Both sides agreed that it would be helpful to establish guidelines covering a number of areas where a common university policy would be convenient, such as long service leave transferability, recognition of study leave entitlements, conditions for fractional appointments and so on. The expression 'guideline' was used because the SAC negotiators were quite unable to commit the councils of all universities to adopt them. However, in good faith the guidelines were adopted as AVCC policy with the hope that in time they would become common policy. There was an elaborate procedure agreed between the AVCC and FAUSA involving several circulations of drafts among both sides' constituent members before ratification by the full committee. Some vice-chancellors regarded the whole process with suspicion.

However, a few guidelines were agreed after hours of tortuous negotiations, innumerable drafts and sometimes initial rejection by the full AVCC. They remain a memorial to the tenacity of those involved. The guideline movement, a jaunty little air of hope and goodwill, finally petered out in 1985 when it was mutually agreed that there was little chance of preparing an acceptable guideline on tutors. Nevertheless, over the three years' discussion, some degree of trust had been established and a better understanding of each other's position had been gained.

Elsewhere, there were exciting developments, some leading to set-piece battles. In Victoria, the academic staff sought the establishment of an Academic Staff Conciliation and Arbitration Board under the Victorian Industrial Relations Commission. This was opposed by the universities, but their objections were overruled and the Board was set up. Similar moves took place in other states. Our hero looked at these developments with suspicion and wondered where a skirmish or battle might first occur.

Of far more significance was the removal of the Act I curse which prevented universities being regarded as an industry and so being registered federally. The High Court decision in the Australian Social Welfare Union Case overturned a long line of earlier decisions from 1929 which had confined the constitutional phrase 'industrial dispute' to mean 'a dispute in industry' which in turn led to interminable arguments as to what were and were not 'industries'. School-teachers were ruled not to be an industry in 1929 and the Gaudron decision had virtually confirmed that universities were not either. However, the High Court decision

in the Social Welfare Case restored the original common sense view of an industrial dispute as being a dispute between an employer and an employee.

With the lifting of this curse (more precisely, the reinterpretation of its terms), the way was open for federal registration of university unions. FAUSA had been expressing increasing concern over proceedings before the Academic Salaries Tribunal and particularly the way in which the Federal Government had obtained a review of a decision on salary increases. Now FAUSA indicated it would seek federal registration.

The AVCC decided that it would have to obtain registration as an employers' association. The process of registration is long and complicated. The rules of a registered association have to fulfil certain conditions. The AVCC was therefore obliged to don yet another disguise, the Australian Universities' Industrial Association, a brand new splendid red military uniform with sword ready to be wielded. Although universities are the members of the AUIA, they are specifically represented by their vice-chancellors. It is recognised that in the hurly-burly of industrial negotiations, quick decisions may have to be taken which may lead to a binding award. The AUIA has a small executive which is empowered to take such decisions if necessary.

"Registration always seems to be two months ahead."

This overriding authority of the executive and other legal complications caused three universities not to join AUIA when it achieved a remarkably quick registration in April, 1985. Three buttons were missing on the bright new uniform. Also, our hero has yet to find someone to fight against. Although FAUSA was the cause of the formation of AUIA, FAUSA (in the disguise of the AAUS) has not yet achieved registration. There have been objections, legal complications and delays. Registration always seems to be two months ahead.

The last scene in the third act is a battle like most stage battles, it does not involve many people and the participants appear repeatedly, fighting individual duels with apparent gusto. However, the consequences on the other characters are significant. The scene is Victoria, the battle is over conditions of employment of tutors at Monash University and it is fought in front of the Victorian Academic Staff Board. It is the first major battle using the formal rules of warfare

Our hero is disconcerted. He thought that any battle that took place would be in the federal arena under quite different rules, but that is not yet to be. In Victoria, tutors have traditionally been appointed on an annual basis with a maximum limit on the total number of years that may be served as a tutor. The hearing before the Board went on for a long time. The universities put forward the case that a tutor was an academic apprentice and that the system was designed to provide sufficient turnover of vacancies for new academic aspirants to learn the profession. The staff associations argued that the concept of apprenticeships did not hold up in reality with so few lecturer vacancies available to fill and that it was unfair to prohibit persons from applying for their own jobs after the maximum period had been completed. To a large extent, the staff arguments won the day. The determination handed down gives tutors contracts of four years' duration (with one year's probation) and they may be re-appointed for two further periods of three years each. They must be paid one calendar year's salary for one academic year's work.

Although this determination strictly only applies to Monash, the other Victorian universities are engaged in discussions with their staff associations to negotiate the possible flow on. Universities in other states have been monitoring the Victorian situation with a certain sense of apprehension as to whether similar action might occur under their state jurisdiction.

So ends Act III with lots of action, stirring drums and clashes of cymbals. There will now be a long entr'acte before the last Act in which some of the earlier themes will be recalled and the audience can sit back and allow their minds to speculate about future developments in the last act.

The theme of general staff can be briefly developed. So far, there has been no general move since 1980 to bring general staff under federal awards, although presumably the Social Welfare Case would make this possible. No doubt this inaction is primarily due to the fragmented representation of general staff. In some states, notably New South Wales, the staff are represented by industrial unions. In others, for example Victoria, the representation is by general staff associations at each institution. These bodies have not found it easy to work together at federal level and there is no national body with the authority and representativeness of FAUSA.

Although there has been some activity at federal level on a small scale, for example the Miscellaneous Workers' Union created a dispute with five universities in different states, this seems far more for tactical reasons than as a real effort to gain federal coverage. As explained

earlier, general staff now have some form of arrangement with universities under state jurisdiction and this seems likely to continue as the main arena for the next five years or so.

I would anticipate there will be a slow trend towards federal coverage and this could well be accelerated if there were another period of financial stringency where general staff were seriously threatened by redundancy or loss of jobs. This forecast of only slow change depends on the assumption that the unique Australian industrial relations mechanism remains basically unchanged, as appears likely. If the rules change, the actors may behave very differently.

The role of the academic staff in the last Act will be very different. There is no doubt that the Victorian tutors' case won significant improvements in conditions. It must be tempting for Staff Associations to contemplate repeating the exercise elsewhere under State jurisdiction, particularly as it may be difficult to achieve such a result under the much more formal proceedings of the Federal Commission.

"When federal registration is achieved, the AUIA will do its utmost to ensure that all major disputes are heard before the Federal Commission rather than in the states . . ."

While this may well happen in the short term, I do not believe that it represents a continuing pattern of activity in the future for a number of reasons. First, FAUSA is genuinely anxious to secure federal registration. They see it as a far better arena in which to discuss salaries and similar conditions than the Academic Salaries Tribunal. A federal award is binding and not subject to government intervention. When federal registration is achieved, the AUIA will do its utmost to ensure that all major disputes are heard before the Federal Commission rather than in the states, for this would avoid a leap-frogging pattern of action in various states successively improving conditions in an uncontrolled way. FAUSA, also, would be concerned at too much action being generated by state or individual associations lest it frustrate the overall strategy. It seems likely that academic

staff industrial relations will within a year or so mainly take place federally, leaving the state jurisdictions to deal with problems like unfair dismissals.

This move will have considerable consequences. On the universities' side, AUIA is ready to handle the employers' side. The three absent universities have now joined the Association, the uniform has all its buttons complete. The Association is now distinct from the AVCC with its own staff and procedures, but it will face major difficulties.

The governing bodies of universities have rightly considered themselves as autonomous bodies able to prescribe conditions for their staff. Although they have given their vice-chancellors authority to negotiate on their behalf, councils will find it difficult to accept that proceedings conducted elsewhere will overrule their desired policies. It will not be easy to formulate such policies in any case. Councils traditionally have significant staff membership, often active members of their staff associations, and will have to formulate procedures by which industrial policies can be developed that serve the interests of the whole university.

Equally, AUIA will have to ensure that lines of communication with individual universities are sufficiently swift and secure that such policies can be taken into account. Inevitably, however, decisions will sometimes be taken that run counter to the wishes of some councils and their vice-chancellors. That will cause conflict, tensions and unease, particularly if the content of the decisions is more concerned with conditions than salaries. In time, I foresee that the whole concept of collegiality will be destroyed.

Another difficulty may be connected with inter-union rivalry and the problem of the employers having to negotiate with several unions representing academic staff. The original concept was that AUIA and the FAUSA industrial organisation would be the prime parties, with the NSW Teachers' Federation having a small role in that state. However, that sole coverage of academic staff is being attacked now in two ways.

The Association of Professional Engineers has attempted to gain coverage of university engineering staff. Although thwarted at the moment, it is likely APEA will try again at some future time. The Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation is attempting to gain coverage of academic staff in medical education and research. It may well succeed and

other professional bodies may follow their example.

In other recent developments, the Federation of College Academics may find itself covering some university staff as a result of upgrading of colleges to universities by state legislation and amalgamations. It is unlikely they would willingly abandon coverage of whole institutions. All this leads to a scenario where Federal Commission hearings may involve several parties leading to complicated negotiations which may be inimical to the best interests of the institutions.

"In time, I foresee that the whole concept of collegiality will be destroyed."

Equally worrying is the problem of funding awards made by the Commission. Although it has occasionally faltered, the Federal Government has provided funds for recommendations handed down by the Academic Salaries Tribunal. It has yet to be seen whether the Government will take part in proceedings before the Federal Commission. I have a suspicion that it will move to a system of prospective funding, including an allowance for future salary increases, and leave AUIA in an advisory role to ensure that it lives within that allowance. Such a policy would lead to a further deterioration in staff relations and the concept of collegiality.

So ends the entr'acte. We sit in our seats waiting for the curtain to rise on the last act. If my interpretation of the music is correct, it is going to be a somewhat confused tragic ending, like most operas. The tradition of universities being a different, less structured form of employment will end. We are now an industry and, over time, will find ourselves behaving like an industry. It is unlikely that there will be prescribed hours of work, clocking in and so on, but the flexibility and freedom that we have all appreciated will decline. The Force of Destiny may turn out to be in fact La Traviata, the Frail One.

But hush! The curtain is about to rise.

***At the time this was written Professor Scott was Chairman of the Australian Universities' Industrial Association. He has been succeeded by Professor D. Caro.**

Chips in the academic wall?

Women and postgraduate study

Margaret Powles

University of Melbourne

In view of the considerable concern over the minority status of women academics¹, it is surprising that women postgraduates have attracted so little research interest² when it would be safe to assert that a doctorate is now a universal prerequisite for an academic career. By examining some statistics and collating the few studies that have been conducted, this paper reviews what is known about the current position of Australian women in postgraduate study.

The figures

Table 1 restates some commonly known facts. Women now constitute almost half of the university undergraduate popula-

tion. In 1984, 48% of students commencing bachelor degrees were women but only about 30% of students commencing PhDs and 37% of students commencing masters degrees were women. The greatest increase in the proportion of students who are women is, however, occurring at the masters level. These figures, together with those showing higher proportions of women commencing postgraduate diplomas are often cited as evidence that women fail to envisage the 'higher goal' of a PhD and consequently are less competitive in the academic sweepstakes.³ Nevertheless despite many constraints (which will be discussed later), women have been gradually but steadily chipping

away at the academic wall; more women now both commence and complete higher degrees than they did in 1979.

Gender imbalance in different fields of study both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level is common knowledge and most publications dealing with this topic have emphasised a persistence over time of male dominance in subject areas traditionally held to be 'masculine'. The statistical record demonstrates, however, that the situation has altered dramatically over the past decade. As Table 2 shows⁴, at the undergraduate level women have moved out of 'female' fields overall at a faster rate than the rate of decrease in the share of total enrolments in those fields,

Table 1
University Students Commencing and Completing Post-graduate and Bachelor Degrees by Sex, 1979-1984.

Degree	Commencing			Completing		
	Males	Females %	Persons	Males	Females %	Persons
PhD						
1979	795	269 (25)	1064	730	141 (16)	871
1980	770	257 (25)	1027	678	163 (19)	841
1981	907	318 (26)	1225	711	184 (21)	895
1982	1207	482 (29)	1687	697	204 (23)	901
1983	918	394 (30)	1312	704	202 (22)	906
1984	984	402 (29)	1387	761	195 (20)	956
Masters						
1979	3168	1367 (30)	4535	1630	514 (24)	2144
1980	3088	1446 (31)	4534	1556	538 (26)	2094
1981	3590	1803 (33)	5393	1639	617 (27)	2256
1982	3710	1972 (35)	5682	1617	623 (28)	2240
1983	3424	1816 (35)	5240	1830	754 (29)	2584
1984	3300	1909 (37)	5209	1997	846 (30)	2843
Postgraduate Diploma						
1979	2099	1946 (48)	4045	1692	1873 (53)	3565
1980	2098	1956 (48)	4054	1547	1740 (53)	3287
1981	2094	1908 (48)	4002	1452	1662 (53)	3114
1982	1913	1883 (50)	3796	1362	1559 (54)	2961
1983	2059	2080 (50)	4139	1337	1507 (53)	2844
1984	2161	2062 (49)	4223	1393	1634 (54)	3027
Bachelor						
1979	23281	18877 (45)	42158	15594	10561 (40)	26155
1980	23070	19709 (46)	42779	15199	10660 (41)	25859
1981	22698	19850 (47)	42548	14610	10872 (43)	25482
1982	21741	19738 (48)	41479	14208	10999 (44)	25207
1983	21743	19946 (48)	41689	14148	11579 (45)	25727
1984	22459	20891 (48)	43350	14448	11470 (44)	25918

Source of Data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 4218.0